

Rescaling the global borderlands: Transperipheral projections from ‘the heart of the Amazon’

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ABSTRACT

This article examines semiotic resignifications undertaken in ‘peripheral’ cultural production through an ethnographic analysis of the trajectory of the Amazonian artist, Jaloo. Jaloo occupies multiple positions of marginality in Brazilian society and artistic scenes, which he connects to other global peripheries in his performances, aesthetics, and self-narratives. Building on anthropological and sociolinguistic scholarship, we show how ‘peripheral’ status is managed by Jaloo in the context of a growing and politicised audience for outsider and alternative cultural production. We theorise Jaloo’s negotiation of his relationship with audiences and the media as rescaling. Further, we argue that this rescaling entails the ordering of semiotic resources into a social imaginary that reconfigures peripheral territories and identities, which we consider in terms of a transperipheral chronotope. (Inequality, chronotopes, indexicality, race, coloniality, scales, periphery)

INTRODUCTION

Recently, scholars including Facina (2007), Lopes (2010), Silva Souza (2009), and Fabrício & Moita-Lopes (2019) have drawn attention to the ways in which racial and social inequalities have contributed to disruptive cultural forms in Brazilian peripheries. Such work suggests that peripheral cultural and political practices emerge from strategies of survival, resistance, and hope under conditions of routine violence, racism, LGBTQI+ phobia, misogyny, and a lack of basic services and housing (Lopes, Silva, Facina, Calazans, & Tavares 2018). Here we contribute to this emerging body of scholarship by focusing on projections of a ‘peripheral’ social imaginary at the intersections of online and global subcultural movements, regional and urban popular cultures, and commercial cultural industries. Such an imaginary semiotically disrupts economic, moral, cultural, geographical, and racial orders mapped onto relations of coloniality by promoting alternative relations of solidarity between marginalized peoples and territories.

We focus on the case of Jaloo, an artist from the Amazonian region who is cast as peripheral in multiple semiotic orders, which he seeks to mobilise and re-signify in his cultural production and self-projection, considered here in terms of rescaling (Carr & Lempert 2016). Jaloo's artistic trajectory is cast by the music industry as moving from a geographical, cultural, and 'civilisational' periphery to the modern, urban centre: 'from the heart of the Amazon forest to the national pop and electro scene'.¹ This trajectory is emphasised in the branding of Jaloo's participation in large commercial music festivals, such as Rock in Rio, as part of a 'northern invasion' of Amazonian artists. This positioning as a representative of the 'wilds' of the Amazon is further evident in the use of his lyrics in university entrance examinations as part of a question on rainfall climatology (University of Brasília 2018).

Although Jaloo acknowledges his status as an artist from the borderlands of the Amazon, he radically rescales this status by casting himself as also an outsider in the Amazon, and hence as an 'alien' who is in a constant locus of alterity. Jaloo's artistic rescaling involves multiple (re)positionings of his identity as an Indigenous-mestizo, androgynous, gay, Amazonian performer of hybrid musical genres. Such identity work evokes some of the 'connective marginalities' of global hip hop (Osumare 2001), which link Afro-diasporic and other minoritized identities across a range of contexts. To investigate this identity work, we draw on ethnographic analysis of online interactions, as well as fieldwork undertaken in the city of São Paulo, where Jaloo is based, and Castanhal, Jaloo's home city in the north of Brazil.

Our discussion here is based on data collected by Joel. Initial contact with online networks and the artistic circulation of the Brazilian artist Jaloo was made in 2012. At that moment, Jaloo was employed as a producer in a community music studio located in a *favela* in the periphery of São Paulo, South America's largest metropolis, while living in cramped conditions in the centre of the city with friends from the Amazonian region. Joel frequented the indie music scene in São Paulo, attending events at which Jaloo performed and having regular social contact in 2012, as well as following his career development subsequently online. A corpus of thirty-two media texts published on Jaloo over the years 2012–2019 was also analysed, including published interviews, profiles on online music distribution platforms, and on Jaloo's professional Facebook page. Interviews with fans of Jaloo living in the Amazonian region were undertaken in 2019.

In the first section we discuss rescaling as a framework for examining peripheral artistic positioning. The second section focuses on how shifting material conditions of inequality and exploitation shape Jaloo's life and work as a peripheral artist. The third section shows how Jaloo is scaled in journalistic encounters in São Paulo, and how he rescales himself. The fourth section shows how this rescaling work contributes to the establishment of a transperipheral chronotope. The final section shows how rescaling is collaboratively achieved in audience interactions with Jaloo's work that contribute to a distinctive social imaginary.

RESCALING THE PERIPHERY

We use scaling here to refer to the establishment of perspectives in discourse that make visible dimensions such as relative proximity, importance, legitimacy, classification, affinity, and so on (Carr & Lempert 2016). Whereas Blommaert posits ‘up-scaling’ as a power move available to those in positions of authority, other shifts may involve horizontal rescaling or de-scaling (Carr & Fisher 2016; Moita-Lopes 2020). In the context of Brazilian peripheries Silva & Lee (2020) have shown that rescaling can involve moves from bureaucratic to local registers, as well as projections into other dimensions of the social imaginary, such as hope. In their study of discursive work around the assassination of town councillor Marielle Franco, Silva & Lee argued that mourners powerfully rescaled Marielle’s life by indexing it within a present temporality of protest and a future of hope, using slogans such as ‘Marielle lives’.

Scaling, hence, involves shifts between orders of indexicality, which are understood here, with reference to Foucault’s notion of orders of discourse (Blommaert 2010:36), as normative hierarchies guiding semiotic judgements. For example, formal schooling and hip-hop collectives are discursive sites that provide contrasting orders of indexicality for interpreting and valuing the vernacular Portuguese spoken in the urban periphery of São Paulo, South America’s most populous city. Whereas the structures of formal schooling stigmatise this register, it is embraced by hip-hop communities, contributing to new social imaginaries, as shown by Silva Souza (2009). Silva Souza theorises the community-building practices of those involved in hip hop in São Paulo as producing a distinctive set of meanings and values that generate what she terms *literacies of re-existence*. Literacies of re-existence are forms of meaning-making generated by the production and circulation of texts related to hip hop and to daily life in the periphery.

As the case of hip hop illustrates, rescaling disturbs existing orders of indexicality and contributes to the emergence of new ones. This is further evident in the resignification of the *favela* from a territory defined by hostility, poverty, and neglect to one defined by distinctive forms of culture and political consciousness. The process of resignification of signs such as *favela* undertaken by peripheral cultural agents contributes to a subversive order of indexicality that recognises the agency of the *favela* and *favelado* subject.

The notion of chronotope is useful here for thinking about scaling as a dynamic process through which semiotic resources cohere and become legible. Chronotopes can be understood as ‘specific timespace arrangements with ideological and moral orders, projecting possible and preferred identities’ (Blommaert 2017:96). Chronotopes provide sociohistorically conditioned scripts that are unequally available and valued, even as their mobilisation and resignification allows for the projection of new chronotopic identities (Blommaert 2015, 2018). As Blommaert (2015:3) notes:

Chronotopes invoke orders of indexicality valid in a specific timespace frame... Specific timespace configurations enable, allow, and sanction specific modes of behaviour as positive, desired, or

compulsory (and disqualify deviations from that order in negative terms), and this happens through the deployment and appraisal of chronotopically relevant indexicals—indexicals that acquire a certain recognizable value when deployed within a particular timespace configuration.

Anzaldúa's (1987) narration of the 'borderlands' helps to make clearer how rescaling can move between, and project, new timespace configurations as part as an artistic project. In a dominant chronotopic configuration, Anzaldúa is projected as a Mexican-American, a migrant, a migrant woman who is submissive to men in her culture, and a person who belongs neither to American nor Mexican cultures and languages. Rejecting this chronotope, Anzaldúa temporally indexes her identity to pre-colonial times, affirming a connection to the land and to Indigenous spirituality, as well as to contemporary boundary-crossing movements. She chronotopically constructs the borderlands as:

a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants. *Los atravesados* live here: the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulato, the half-breed, the half dead; in short those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the 'normal'. (Anzaldúa 1987:25)

The identity granted agency in this chronotope is constituted by alterity; the borderlands is semiotically ordered as a timespace for a different type of community that lays claim to multiple and overlapping geographical, linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and spiritual emblems that are on the margins of legitimate orders. This perspective feeds into recent Brazilian scholarship identifying the 'transperiphery' as a space constructed by translocal and transnational connections between peripheries (Windle, Souza Silva, Nascimento e Silva, Zaidan, Maia, Muniz, & Lorenzo 2020).

This subversive and peripheral rescaling is undertaken against the socio-historical forces of coloniality, which deny agency to colonized peoples and restrict them to past traditions and uncivilized customs in the wilds of nature (Collingwood-Whittick 2007). Mention of the Amazon, for example, is sufficient to invoke a dense, colonial chronotope in Brazil and globally, also activating ecological and developmentalist chronotopes. Coloniality is evident in many discursive and semiotic formations that have as their common organizing principle the dehumanization and disqualification of the bodies of the colonised (Mbembe 2017). This principle is evident in Brazil in the structural racism endured by Indigenous and Black populations.

Rescaling, as a disruptive subaltern discursive strategy, is therefore centrally concerned with the indexical qualities of the body. Black, Indigenous, feminine, and queer bodies that are out of place, out of time, or speak back are threats to the order of coloniality. Post-colonial aesthetics, for example, introduce melancholia and 'unbelonging' as disruptive tropes (Almond 2004; Collingwood-Whittick 2007). These tropes disrupt the triumphalist and white-supremacist fantasy of a unified national body into which all are fully integrated and of which all are accepting. Queer linguistics has similarly emphasised the importance of the gendered, sexualized, and raced body, produced under conditions of coloniality, as a site of

discursive contestation (Borba & Milani 2019; Moita-Lopes 2020). Scholars in this field argue that queer aesthetics and identity construction emerge from ruptures between normative and subcultural orders of indexicality (Moita-Lopes & Fabrício 2013; Barrett 2017).

THE MATERIAL CONDITIONS OF PERIPHERAL CULTURAL PRODUCTION

Peripheral cultural producers, like others, align themselves chronotopically in ways that make their art and themselves legible, credible, and valuable for particular audiences, peers, markets, and media. In Jaloo's case, he was initially made legible through the categorisation of his work within the genre of music known as *tecnobrega*. Through this categorization, Jaloo's artistic trajectory began in a space positioned as peripheral in geographical, cultural, and economic terms, that is, in the Amazon. He also began producing music in relative isolation from local peers, after watching a documentary on the underground production and circulation of *brega* music in 2010 (Godinho & Cunha 2009). *Brega* is the label given by the commercial music industry to a popular musical style from the Amazonian north of Brazil. *Brega* literally means 'tacky' or 'kitsch', indexing judgement of the poor and *mestizo* audiences of the Amazonian region with which the genre is most associated (Facina 2011). However, artists like Jaloo invert—or rescale—the negative indexical value of the term by building upon it to describe hybrid genres, such as *tecnobrega*, which incorporates electro-remixes.

Jaloo developed his cultural sensibilities and artistic skills through solitary screen time on his laptop, which connected him to other communities and subcultures, along with additional chronotopic frames within which to position himself. This remote socialisation included watching YouTube tutorials on the use of free software Frootyloops on his laptop, where he produced his first *brega* remixes of local and international pop artists. The self-publication of these remixes on Youtube allowed Jaloo's work to quickly encounter a receptive audience that included 'cultural intermediaries' (Gibson & Moore 2018) who facilitated his move to the alternative cultural scene of São Paulo, 3,000 kilometres away. There, in 2011, he gained employment as a producer in a social-outreach project in the city's eastern periphery. Institutional recognition of Jaloo's skills in remixing (and upscaling) a regionally defined genre gave him access to a role as a cultural and technical intermediary for another stigmatised, regionally defined genre—the *carioca funk* that emerged in the 1990s from remixes of Miami bass in Rio de Janeiro, later spreading to São Paulo.

Despite being identified as an Amazonian artist, Jaloo has difficulty booking shows in the Amazon region, and his live audiences are concentrated amongst alternative and queer music fans in the southeast (São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro), where his sensibilities find strongest resonance. With the world's largest Gay Pride Parade taking place in São Paulo and the emergence of transgender and



FIGURE 1. Online album cover of #1 (<https://www.discogs.com/Jaloo-1/release/8010886>).

queer artists over the course of the 2010s, Jaloo fits in with a wider ‘set’ of independent cultural producers, venues, and events. Jaloo has made a name for himself in this milieu by playing on, and being read as, racially and sexually exotic, in line with the Amazonian chronotope of the ‘savage’ and ‘wild’, ‘civilizational’ frontier. This is evident in journalistic descriptions of his androgyny and ‘undeniably indigenous traits’ (Marvin 2016) in an urban setting defined by White, heteronormative values.

In this setting, Jaloo plays on exoticism by mixing Indigenous, gender fluid, urban, and futuristic aesthetics, undermining the hegemonic positioning of the Indigenous body as defined by tradition and nature. The artwork for Jaloo’s first album (see Figure 1), commercially released in 2015, shows a glistening Jaloo immersed in a plasticised pink foam, with hair and face paint that remix indices of Amazonian indigenous identities. The name of the album contributes to the disjunctive scaling, evoking the English of the global music industry through the number sign (#). This ‘queering’ of Amazonian identity markers appeals to the sensitivities of gay and alternative music audiences in São Paulo, intensifying as well as resignifying exoticism (understood as the strange and the other).

Yet this semiotic mixing is more than artistic playfulness. Instead, it is a self-reflective response to the material conditions of life forged between peripheral spaces, as Brazilian urban anthropologists have argued (Lopes et al. 2018). The force of these conditions is evident in online expressions of frustration. Upon returning to São Paulo after a rare performance in the Amazonian city of Belém, Jaloo commented on the emotional dislocation involved in the necessity of basing a career far from home:²

São Paulo (.) te odei::o (.) mas como dizem (1) é aqui que a gente consegue trabalhar (.) se desenvolver (.) criar coisas (.) montar show (.5) então (1) São Paulo (.) te odei::o e te amo.

‘São Paulo (.) I hate you(.) but as the saying goes (1) this is where we are able to find work (.) develop our selves (.) create things (.) put on shows (.5) so (1) São Paulo (.) I ha::te you and I love you.’ (Facebook story, November 9, 2019)

In his speech, frequent long pauses and emphasis on the irreconcilable ‘love’ and ‘hate’ for São Paulo index Jaloo’s weariness and resignation. His lament reflects the fact that economic survival is dependent upon being present in the urban south-eastern music scene, where it is possible to come to the attention of commercial labels and venues. Mainstream media, such as the Brazilian Globo TV Network, regularly recruit ‘talent’ from the periphery who have already gained some attention in these spaces, and in turn media attention feeds into transnational circuits, including magazines such as *Rolling Stone* and streaming services.

The growing commodification of non-white, poor, and LGBTQI+ artists, as true of Jaloo himself, is linked to improved socioeconomic conditions during the years of the Workers’ Party government (2003–2016), which increased the presence of youth from peripheral neighbourhoods in the nightclubs of São Paulo’s central district. In 2018, the *Folha de São Paulo* newspaper reported that ‘performers who do not fit gender norms, with bodies adorned with elaborate costumes, have become as essential as techno to São Paulo’s night-life’ (Perassolo 2018:1). The same report noted that, in addition to the valuing of transgressive racial and gender performances, the São Paulo’s nightlife is increasingly characterised by the explicit political positionings of artists. Not mentioned is the fact that most of these peripheral artists remain poor, even when, like Jaloo, their work features in national commercial music events. Jaloo himself has declared he is exhausted from carrying the financial burden of his recordings and performances, in an interview given to the widely-circulating *Globo* newspaper on the day he performed in Brazil’s largest music event, Rock in Rio (Ristow 2019).

The account above points to tensions between Jaloo’s artistic roots and affective ties to the ‘peripheral’ north, on one hand, and, on the other his incorporation into an emerging alternative and queer entertainment industry in the urban ‘centre’ of São Paulo. While this incorporation involves a degree of recognition of Jaloo as an innovative artist, it is also premised on the objectification and exploitation of his identity in the timespace of the Indie music scene.

NEGOTIATING ORDERS OF INDEXICALITY

The establishment of indexical meanings for Jaloo’s trajectory, body, and art within the Indie music scene is most evident in the alternative music press, which takes as its starting point indexical cues of bodily alterity and abjection. Abjection is taken here as a discursive process relating to ‘all kinds of bodies whose lives are not considered to be “lives” and whose materiality is understood not to “matter”’ (Butler in Meijer & Prins 1998:281). Signs of abjection, as Mbembe (2017) notes in relation to the noun ‘Black’, exist as dehumanising designations and invocations, but are also capable of being reversed as signs of defiance. The incorporation of signs of

abjection has been termed ‘abject aesthetics’ in relation to the deliberate effort to cause discomfort as part of the artistic project expressed by queer, Black Brazilian hip-hop artist Jefferson Ricardo da Silva (known artistically as Dalasam) (Fabrício & Moita-Lopes 2019).

Like other poor, androgynous, and non-white queers, Jaloo is descaled (Carr & Fischer 2016) into a devalued and, simultaneously, fetishised position in an order of indexicality that has its roots in colonial power structures (Melo & Moita-Lopes 2014). Written journalistic accounts draw attention to Jaloo’s defiant attitude towards, and, indeed, appropriation of corporeal marks of stigma:

Dentro ou fora do palco, sua aparência chama a atenção. O corte de cabelo incomum e os traços indígenas tornam o artista alvo de olhares curiosos—e também incomodados—no dia a dia em São Paulo. ‘Se eu cortasse o meu cabelo convencionalmente, poderia estar andando muito mais tranquilo na rua’, admite. Mas ele faz questão de manter sua identidade, algo que considera como um filtro de convivência. ‘Se as pessoas entram alguém por causa do corte de cabelo dela, não são pessoas com quem eu quero conviver.’

‘On or off the stage, his appearance catches the eye. The unusual haircut and the indigenous traits make the artist the target of curious—and also uncomfortable—looks in everyday life in São Paulo. ‘If I cut my hair conventionally, I could be walking much more calmly on the street’, he admits. But he insists on maintaining his identity, something he considers to be a filter of social relations. ‘If people get weirded-out because of a haircut, they are not people I want to socialise with.’ (Terto 2016)

This excerpt shows not only a journalistic reading of Jaloo’s body and hair as unusual and exotic, but Jaloo’s negotiation and rescaling of it. Here, Jaloo uses the ‘indexical disjuncture’ (Barrett 2017:17) of his appearance as a ‘filter’ to distance those who feel ‘uncomfortable’ and draw closer those who value him. Jaloo projects a social circle and audience that value semiotic markers of his border-crossing identity and aesthetics. This selectivity is important to rescaling in that it excludes the force of hegemonic indexical values at the very outset of a potential interaction (visual contact) and robs the power of those who bring such judgements of their dehumanising gaze. It is clear in this example that Jaloo playfully takes up the journalist’s scaling of him as an object of curiosity, revaluing the objectifying gaze as a tool for protection of self. Further, his invocation of others who recognise and accept him points to the effort to establish a new collectivity, through the alignment of shared sensibilities and values that are indexed by the unusual and the exotic.

Jaloo’s negotiations of journalistic scalings of his body and cultural production are also evident in his response to attempts to pin him down as a political spokesperson for a collective LGBTQI+ movement—something that has cohered as a theme that defines peripheral artists in central music venues. Jaloo has expressed reticence when interpellated as a spokesperson for a queer polity, noting that queer is a label given to him by others. For example, in 2017 the reporter Medeiros asked Jaloo how he feels about performing on a stage with other artists who are ‘connected to struggles for minorities’, eliciting the following response, as part of a written interview:

Eu fico muito feliz, em primeiro lugar. É muito legal ser parte de uma minoria, mesmo sem estar cantando sobre ela. Eu sou o que eu sou, eu só existo e, por conta disso, eu sou enquadrado como um artista gay, ou de minoria, de empoderamento, de tombamento... Só que, no fim das contas, o

meu disco nem fala sobre isso. Eu me preocupo muito com a natureza das coisas, não quero sentar para escrever uma música política, de empoderamento... se surgir na hora de escrever, ótimo, vou ficar muito feliz, mas não chego a planejar isso. Essa segmentação foi um presente, porque deu para as pessoas o que falar, mas é tudo bem natural. E é engraçado porque estou aprendendo muita coisa. Eu fui colocado nessa corrente, mas não entendia várias coisas e estou agora nesse eterno aprendizado. 'In the first place, I'm very happy. It's really cool to be part of a minority, even without singing about it. I am what I am, I only exist and, because of that, I am framed as a gay artist, or of a minority, of empowerment... Except that, in the end, my record doesn't even talk about it. I worry a lot about the nature of things, I don't want to sit down to write a political song, about empowerment... if it comes into my head to write about it, great, I'll be very happy, but I don't even plan to do that. This segmentation was a gift, because it gave people something to talk about, but it's all very natural. And it's funny because I'm learning a lot. I was placed in this movement, but I didn't understand many things and now I'm constantly learning.' (de Medeiros 2017)

Jaloo points clearly to how he is scaled in the São Paulo music scene, becoming recognised artistically due to being classified as a gay artist and connected to a movement of 'empowerment'. However, he notes that this scaling is undertaken by others ('I am framed as a gay artist'), and that his lyrics do not perform political work, since they do not thematize gay identity or struggle. Rather, it is his very existence that places him 'ontologically' within this struggle. In the excerpt above, Jaloo repositions himself as something of an outsider to queer politics who 'didn't understand' many things and is in the position of learner. This narrative is characteristic of Jaloo's scaling of himself as constituted by a degree of distance and unbelonging, rather than centrality or representativity.

This distancing is further evident in comments Jaloo made in a written interview for international media, published in English. Jaloo is journalistically categorised as 'inspiring Brazilian LGBTQ youth to live without fear' and 'perhaps the most prominent out queer musician in a nation where over 40% of the ENTIRE WORLD'S anti-LGBTQ violence occurs' (Myers 2016). In his response, Jaloo acknowledges Brazilian homophobia thematised by the foreign journalist, but also rescales himself as part of another order of indexicality that exists in the northern periphery of Brazil:

People in north Brazil are actually more used to having trans people, compared to mid-west Brazil and the south. I would compare the attitude in the north to that of Thailand, maybe. It's an interesting thing, but Brazilian-Indian culture has always been more open to trans people and gender fluidity. (Myers 2016)

Here Jaloo lays claim to a timespace that connects androgynous and transgendered people in Indigenous cultures in Brazil. These cultures, are generally framed as 'backwards' or merely 'exotic' in relation to cosmopolitan São Paulo or other 'developed' spaces; however, Jaloo inverts this order by casting them as more tolerant spaces than the 'central' spaces of Brazil's large, and apparently cosmopolitan, metropolises.

TRANSPERIPHERAL SCALAR PROJECTIONS

Jaloo's negotiation and rescaling of journalistic and wider cultural framings cohere into a spatiotemporal imaginary that joins peripheral spaces and identities to project

an emergent chronotope—that is a timespace configuration within which a certain order of indexicality gains intelligibility and legitimacy as a resource for discursive performance. The following excerpt from a filmed interview conducted by the journalist Braz in downtown São Paulo shows a number of indexicals that contribute to this chronotope:

- Interviewer: teu som (.) ele talvez tenha um pouco de *tecnobrega* (.) mas ele tem uma mistura muito maior de coisas (.) ele é quase uma coisa meio da *ficção científica*, tem uma coisa meio *futurista* tanto na estética como na sonoridade mesmo.
 ‘Your sound (.) it may have a little bit of *tecnobrega* (.) but it has a much greater mix of things (.) it is almost a *science fiction* thing (.) there is a *futuristic* thing about aesthetics as well as the sound.’
- Jaloo: Eu até usei essa nomenclatura (.) que era sci-fi brega no *começo* porque eu gostava dessa via brega da *ficção científica* da década de 70, né? dos ETs ((risos)) (.) ter uma roupa meio power rangers e tudo (.) Toda aquela coisa engraçada né? só que com o *tempo* eu fui entendendo que o meu som era mais *universal* (.) e que ele se comunicava com diversas aldeias globais (.) por exemplo tem um que é de *kudu:ro*, eu brinco com *fu:nk* também.
 ‘I even used this term (.) sci-fi *brega* in the *beginning* (.) because I liked this *brega* science fiction style of the 70s, you know? of ETs ((laughs)) (.) having a Power Rangers-style outfit and everything (.) all that funny stuff right? but over *time* I started to understand that my sound was more *universal* (.) and that it communicated with several global villages (.) for example there is one that is *kuduro* (.) I play with *fu:nk* too.’

(Braz 2016)

The interviewer opens by emphasising the multiple stylistic and aesthetic tokens present in Jaloo’s work (*tecnobrega*, science fiction, futuristic). Jaloo draws attention to the temporality of his ongoing scalar construction (‘the beginning’, ‘over time’). He mobilises discourse about the kitsch/queer identity of *brega* music within the kitsch aesthetic of globally circulating emblems of the future from other times and places. However, such mobilisations are provisional and ‘playful’, indexed by laughter, and Jaloo narrates himself as subsequently adopting a scalar projection of his music as more ‘universal’, through reference to ‘global villages’. Citing the *kuduro* style from the peripheries of Angola and *funk Carioca*, the predominant style in the peripheries of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, Jaloo predicates his artistic body as ‘communicating’ between these peripheral spaces.

This self-reflexive multiscale positioning is further produced by Jaloo’s account of himself as someone who finds and picks up a wide range of indexical tokens

online, and who even ‘lives online’, as shown in the following excerpt from the same interview:

Interviewer: Me fala um pouco da sua estética (.) que eu acho que é muito curiosa assim (.) tanto a capa do disco como as fotos (.) assim (.) Você tem essa mistura né? Você tem um cara um pouco indígena também (.) é meio ‘curumim do futuro’ (.) não sei? tem essa mistura né?

‘Tell me a little bit about your aesthetics (.) which I think is very curious I mean (.) both the album cover as well as the photos (.) like (.) You have this mixture right? You have a bit of an Indigenous face too (.) it’s kind ‘*curumim* from the future’ (.) I don’t know? There is this mixture right?’

Jaloo: Tem a mistura que é totalmente a minha tara por internet ((risos)) viciado em rede social (.) que adora tumble (.) que adora blog (.) então no meio disso eu vou fazendo colagem de referência e (.) dentre essas referências (.) acabou surgindo essa brincadeira com plástico (.) que era remetendo à estreia (.) porque era o meu primeiro disco (.4) E aí ele é um recorte de tudo isso assim (.) de uma pessoa que vive a internet (.) que pega referências que acha legal e que ao mesmo tempo tem essa alma indígena da ancestralidade (.5) eu fui ao Pará um ano e meio atrás (.) e todo mundo achava que eu era gringo lá ((risos)) e aí (.) eu chego aqui o pessoal acha que eu não sou daqui também (.) eu chego-tipo ‘eu não sou de lugar nenhum’ (.) e aí eu comecei aceitar isso (.) Essa coisa de ‘ah, já que eu sou esquisito (.) já que não pertencço a nenhum lugar (.) que seja as estrelas.

‘There is the mix that is totally my obsession for the internet ((laughter)) addicted to social media (.) who loves Tumblr (.) who loves blogging (.) So in the middle of that I make a collage of references and (.) from among these references came this game with plastic that referred to the launch (.) because it was my first album (.4) and then it is a selection of all that like of a person who lives online (.) who grabs references that he thinks are cool and that at the same time has this soul of indigenous ancestry (.5) I went to Pará a year and a half ago and everyone thought I was a foreigner there (laughter) and then (.) I get here people think I’m not from here either (.) I arrive like ‘I’m not from anywhere’ (.) and then I started to accept that (.) this ‘ah, since I’m weird, since I don’t belong anywhere, other than the stars.’

Interviewer: Pertence a todos os lugares

‘Or belongs everywhere’

Jaloo: Ou a todos.

‘Or everywhere.’

(Braz 2016)

In this section of the interview, the interviewer again evokes mixing and hybridity, with pauses and checking ('right?'), indexing uncertainty about how to frame Jaloo's ethnic identity. The framing nevertheless draws on a colonially constructed racial identity, that of the *mestizo*, a mixing of indigenous, white, and African ancestries. This indexical token is evident in the modalisation ('you have a bit of an Indigenous face') and the use of the term *curumim*, which refers to indigenous children in general, but also to those occupying positions of servitude in the colonial racial hierarchy. In reply, Jaloo again engages in a self-reflexive rescaling, his self-consciousness of his narrative performance evident in his laughter. He projects his agency through online spaces and online existence, distancing himself in a jocular tone from both the periphery and the centre as someone who is viewed as a foreigner and 'weird'. As such, he constructs a timespace in which weirdness and alterity are positively valued.

Jaloo further rescales himself by reference to a spiritual plane (an indigenous soul), playing on the aesthetics of colonial melancholy and loss produced by histories of dispossession and expropriation. Concluding the interview, he picks up the interviewer's suggestion that he is from 'all places', rather than 'no place'. This is a move reminiscent of Anzaldúa's (1987) self-positioning as an *atravesada*, a borderland figure who is remade through projection into multiple peripheral cultural practices and sites. Likewise, Fabrício & Moita-Lopes (2019) identified the queer, peripheral rapper Rico Dalasam with the embracing of a radical hybrid borderland life.

The embracing of multiple peripheral spatialities and temporalities, including through the projection of links between them, is constitutive of what we are terming transperipheral projections. Transperipheral projection is further evident in the following exchange in a written interview published in the Brazilian edition of *Rolling Stone*:

Interviewer: nas suas produções, você prioriza os ritmos considerados periféricos?
'In your productions, do you prioritize rhythms that are considered peripheral?'

Jaloo: Esses ritmos sempre quebram o compasso 4 × 4 da música eletrônica. Não gosto muito da batida contínua. É incrível ver que todos esses ritmos do hemisfério sul, produzidos de forma independente, conversem tanto entre si sem ao menos um produtor conhecer o outro. Esses mistérios me fascinam.
'These rhythms always break the 4 × 4 beat of electronic music. I don't really like the continuous beat. It's incredible to see that all these rhythms in the southern hemisphere, produced independently, converse so much among themselves without even one producer knowing the other. These mysteries fascinate me.'

(Rabassallo 2014)

In this exchange, the interviewer draws attention to the shifting value of the periphery as the centre or ‘priority’ in Jaloo’s artistic production. In his reply, Jaloo projects an almost cosmic connection between local, discontinuous spaces of peripheral music production that ‘converse so much amongst themselves’. Jaloo indeed presents a challenge to conventional notions of timespace unity by suggesting that peripheries are connected not through interactions, but in more mysterious ways—including through his own artistic production as somebody whose identity performances are configured by incommensurable transperipheral moves.

Jaloo further articulates transperipheral projections in terms of the material necessities and affordances of peripheral music scenes in a written interview appropriately titled ‘In another dimension’:

O kuduro em Angola, o funk no Rio, o tecnobrega na Amazônia, o bhangra na Índia... São todos feitos com software piratas, são todos distribuídos e consumidos pela periferia, e não se comunicam um com o outro. Eu chamo isso de ‘elo invisível’ entre as periferias e comparo com as pirâmides, que existiam nas civilizações maia e egípcia sem elas nunca terem se encontrado. E aí dizem que os extraterrestres são mediadores disso e eu adoro essa coisa de alienígena. Gosto de ser esquisito e parecer um ET.

‘Kuduro in Angola, funk in Rio, tecno-brega in the Amazon, bhangra in India... They are all made with pirated software, they are all distributed and consumed by the periphery, and they do not communicate with each other. I call this the ‘invisible link’ between peripheries and compare it to the pyramids, which existed in the Mayan and Egyptian civilizations without them ever having met. And then they say that extra-terrestrials are mediators of this and I love this alien thing. I like to be weird and look like an ET.’ (Bahia 2016)

Jaloo’s bodily self-projection as an ET subverts the centre-periphery divide by positing an extra-global timespace complex, or dimension as the publication puts it. The space of the periphery remains fragmented—but at the same time is predicated as synergised cosmically through the alien borderlands. In this chronotope, the ‘weird’ is re-signified as the cultural centre of mediation between civilisations ranging from ancient Egypt to the Mayan empire.

THE COLLABORATIVE PRODUCTION OF TRANSPERIPHERAL SENSIBILITIES

The indexical qualities that are called forth in the work of scaling, through the referencing of and shifts between orders of indexicality, as well as the spatiotemporal complexes within which such orders hold sway, depend on their wider recognition. For this reason, the semiotic work of rescaling is necessarily interactional and iterative, being open to further resignifications by those who are interpellated. In this sense, Jaloo’s audiences play an important role in the consolidation of his discursive work as constitutive of a transperipheral chronotope. Jaloo’s audiences are engaged in taking up and mobilising shared sensibilities in relation to his linguistic performances, including language choice and accent, and in readings of his visual style. Part of this collaborative production involves distancing both Jaloo and, by implication, audiences from commercial imperatives, which include English-language commercial pop music circuits.

Once Jaloo is interpreted within a transperipheral chronotope, even the use of signs that in other contexts point to mainstream commerciality, is re-signified. For example, efforts made by the Brazilian artist Anitta to enter US and Spanish-speaking markets by learning and singing in English and Spanish are interpreted by Jaloo's fans as indexing alienation from local and authentic cultural practices. By contrast, Jaloo is held to maintain authenticity even while singing in English. For example, Thiago, an Indigenous-Mestizo student from Castanhal, Jaloo's home town, discussed distinctions between Jaloo's use of English and that of Anitta:

A princípio eu achei que ele era um cantor que falava que era brasileiro e cantava músicas em inglês (.) como acontece hoje em dia com a influência de Anitta e tudo mais (.) mas não (.) você vê que são pequenas palavras pra dar um nexo maior nas letras (.) ou seja (.) dá uma americanizada né? pra dar uma ênfase nas letras dele (0.6) Então bastante legal (.) e combina com a estética dos vídeoclipe (é) pra chamar atenção de pessoas de outros países (.) 'Ah Jaloo (.) deve ser inglês (.) deve ser lá do norte (.) dos Estados Unidos (.) e a letra (.) o título da música está em inglês né? vou escutar (.) OLHA (.) português.

'At first I thought he was a singer who said he was Brazilian and sang songs in English (.) as happens nowadays with the influence of Anitta and everything (.) but no (.) you see they are small words to give a greater coherence to the lyrics (.) that is (.) it gives a small Americanised flourish right? to give his lyrics greater force (0.6) so that's very cool (.) and it matches the aesthetics of the video clips (it's) to draw the attention of people from other countries (.) 'Ah Jaloo (.) it must be English (.) it must be from the north (.) from the United States' (.) and the lyrics, the song title is in English right? I will listen (.) OLHA (.) Portuguese.' (Interview, February 2, 2019)

Thiago places emphasis on English in his opening phrase, concluding with emphasis on Portuguese, which he associates with Jaloo and Jaloo's strategic and selective linguistic mixing to give an American flourish. By contrast, singing in English, as an unmarked practice, is associated with the commercialism of Anitta (or others who merely say they are Brazilian). Jaloo's languaging is understood as part of an aesthetics that draws others in to a local and authentic artistic form that includes Portuguese. This cast as a masterful move, almost a magic trick—as signalled by the raising of the voice at '*OLHA!*' 'LOOK', the moment of revelation of Jaloo's true artistic identity.

Later in our interview, Thiago described himself as going through a process of 'de-Americanisation', which involved listening to fewer international, commercial artists and listening to independent Brazilian artists. Indeed, it was through this exploration that he came into contact with Jaloo:

eu gosto muito de música indie-brasileira e comecei a fazer adaptação para tirar essa americanização de mim (.) que era muito forte desde de criança (.) aí eu conheci o Jaloo (.) e eu conheci ele com Chuva (.) acho que foi com chuva (.) e era bem colorido (.) bem diferente do que os artistas produzem aqui no Brasil.

'I really like Indie-Brazilian music and I started adapting to take this Americanisation out of me (.) which was very strong since I was a child (.) then I got to know Jaloo (.) and I got to know him with Chuva (.) I think it was with Chuva (.) and it was very colourful (.) very different from what artists produce here in Brazil.'

Thiago's own rescaling of his musical taste is evident in this comment, positioning Jaloo as outside of both international commercial circuits and 'what artists produce

here in Brazil'. Declaring his taste for music he describes as Indie-Brazilian, Thiago contrasts this with both the international English-language pop music he seeks to reject by 'de-Americanising' his tastes, and with mainstream Brazilian music. Early musical socialisation into American music in this context, of a regional Amazonian city, to the extent that contact with non-mainstream Amazonian artists is only through a deliberate and conscious effort to change. Thiago's referencing of Jaloo's music clip as colourful alludes obliquely to the queer and Indigenous aesthetics that in journalistic accounts are indexed as exotic. Therefore, it is misleading to think of scaling merely as an opposition between local and global—here two globally relevant orders are placed into opposition: an 'inauthentic' mainstream on one hand, and authentic global periphery on the other.

Jaloo's work reaches fans such as Thiago through online exploration and personal networks, but also through algorithms that 'suggest' his work to those who listen to independent Brazilian music and queer-identified artists. This includes a small group of student activists in Castanhal. Natan, a secondary school student active in Black and gay rights movements in Castanhal, described his first contact with Jaloo's music thus:

Pra mim as músicas tão nas plataformas digitais (.) spotify eu utilizo muito (.) e elas dão aqueles algoritmos dão recomendações a partir do que tu escuta (.) então eu acho que colabora bastante para conhecer os artistas novos que tão chegando (.) e o Jaloo chegou assim (.) já estava lá na playlist (0.4) mas eu nunca tinha escutado ele até que o vê no youtube (.) e eu acho que pra mim o contato com os artistas é mais via Twitter e Instagram (.) são redes sociais mais antigas que a gente pode se sentir mais próximo do nosso artista porque eles ficam lá em São Paulo (.) sempre (.) e a gente fica aqui mais pro norte (.) mais afastadinho (.) eu acho que é o contato mais próximo que a gente tem com eles. 'For me, the songs are on digital platforms (.) Spotify I use a lot (.) and the algorithms give recommendations based on what you hear (.) so I think it helps a lot to get to know the new artists who are coming (.) and Jaloo arrived like this (.) he was already there in the playlist (0.4) but I had never heard him until I saw him on YouTube (.) and I think that for me contact with artists is more via Twitter and Instagram (.) they are older social networks that we can feel closer to our artist because they stay there in São Paulo (.) always (.) and we stay here more to the north (.) a little further away (.) I think it's the closest contact we have with them.' (Interview, February 2, 2019)

Natan's membership of politicised student groups and his existing musical tastes, in his account, already provided him with sensibilities that were picked up by algorithms. Like Jaloo himself, Natan spends much time online, gaining contact with 'new artists'. This contact is important to provide a sense of proximity to the artist. Natan emphasises that alternative artists are 'always' in São Paulo, euphemistically positioning himself as 'a little further away'. This euphemism mirrors Jaloo's frustration at not finding an economically viable way of living and performing in the Amazon as an artist, his infrequent appearances making him into a foreigner in his own home.

Natan emphasises how his contact with Jaloo is intimately tied to identities and bodies indexed as abject in hegemonic orders which are central to Jaloo's cultural production, and with which he himself is identified as a gay, Black Amazonian student. He observes:

Eu me vejo mais num debate (.) num discurso que a gente tem livre (.) de redes sociais né? e também assim (.) em alguns atos (.) algumas comunidades (.) comunidades tipo movimento negro (.) movimento LGBT (.) movimento feminista (.) a gente vê isso em debate (.) isso a gente vê (.) consegue enxergar pautas dessas lutas (.) dessas reivindicações né? em boa parte dessas letras (.) em boa parte dessas músicas (.) eu acho que isso que ajuda a gente se, se atrair, né? nossa maior atenção a essas letras.

'I see myself more in a debate (.) In a discussion that is free (.) on social networks, right? and also like that (.) in some protests (.) some communities (.) black movement communities (.) LGBT movement (.) feminist movement (.) we see it in debate (.) we see it (.) we can see the demands of these struggles (.) of these claims, right? in a good part of these lyrics (.) in a good part of these songs (.) I think that this helps us to, to attract each other, right? our greater attention to these lyrics.'

Here Natan observes some of the constraints placed on the times and spaces available for 'free' discussion of political demands for recognition, with which Jaloo is identified. These occur online and within particular communities. These are spaces where subaltern identities and demands become visible—helping to construct a transperipheral chronotope that can be invoked by politically engaged artists and communities in São Paulo, the Amazon, and beyond. The lyrics themselves, according to Natan, help members of subaltern groups to find each other and create new timespace complexes. The process of mutual recognition and attraction is not dissimilar to the social filter Jaloo refers to as he walks the streets of São Paulo, except instead of corporeal semiotic markers; it is knowledge of and taste for particular artists that signals membership of an alternative order.

The signification granted to artists and alternative cultural forms is made evident in the following statement made by Natan:

Quando eu participei do movimento estudantil né? de uma forma mais intensa inicial (.) as pessoas tem esse caráter de valorização da música local e de uma música assim (.) que não seja (.) assim (.) da indústria né? da indústria midiática (1) uma música que seja (0.5) que fale da realidade e que faça um contraste né? juntar assim o que tem mais conteúdo (.) e que traga uma identidade.

'When I participated in the student movement, right? in a more intense initial way (.) people have this characteristic of valuing local music and music like this (.) that is not (.) like (.) from the industry right? from the media industry (1) music that is (0.5) that speaks of reality and that makes a contrast right? thus bringing together what has more content (.) and that brings an identity.'

Natan's socialisation into student politics included 'in a more intense initial way' initiation into music that is indexed as local and non-commercial. With many hesitations as to how best to describe this type of music, Natan ultimately defines it as speaking of reality and 'bringing an identity'. This is no small task, but it is one which is evident in the ways in which fans like Natan and Thiago appropriate and make meaning from Jaloo's music from their own location in the Amazon.

Fan comments on the video clip of Jaloo's English-language song *Downtown* (2014)³ are illustrative of this process of incorporation into a transperipheral order. In the clip, Jaloo incorporates visual elements emblematic of indigenous mythology and of the Afro-Brazilian female deity Oxum. A number of viewer comments on the YouTube clip affectionately combine the Indigenous ethnicity *Tupiniquim*, which within Brazil indexes ideas of 'home-grown' authenticity, with English-language terms 'queer' and 'queen'. Thus producing 'transidiomatic'

tokens (Jacquemet 2005) such as ‘Tupiniqueer’ and ‘Tupiniqueen’ to describe Jaloo, eliciting further responses that index queer identities, such as ‘slay queer!’ (in English). These indexical tokens gain the capacity to contribute to the scaling of a transperipheral chronotope by the circulation of English-language queer cultural and discursive practices in Brazil through online communities and programs such as *Rupaul’s Drag Race*, of which Jaloo himself is a fan. Online interactions serve as pedagogical sites for a transperipheral sensibility, as is evident in the following comment, in which a fan explains the coining of the term ‘Tupiniqueer’ to classify Jaloo:

O termo ‘Queer’ É comumente relacionado com pessoas que não se identificam com as formas usuais de identidade e orientação sexual. amei!!!!

‘The term ‘Queer’ is commonly related to people who don’t identify with usual forms of identity and sexual identity. I love it!!!’
(Response to YouTube Clip of *Downtown*)

In this comment, a term that is not widely known in Portuguese, *queer*, is glossed for an audience, and performer, who are likely to identify with it and who will be able to make use of it as part of an order of indexicality built through transperipheral projections. The positive (re)valuing of the term is signalled in the final phrase—‘I love it’.

This ‘peripheral’ relationship between Jaloo and his fans is not limited to shared sensibilities or experiences, but also to the ways in which his music is shared. Like other *brega* artists, Jaloo relied on informal and unauthorised means for circulating his productions, particular remixes of famous commercial artists. As these were taken down for copyright violations, Jaloo asked his fans to upload them onto their own accounts and pages to keep them on air. Queering and subverting the English term ‘cover’, Jaloo entitled an album of such works *Couve*, which in Portuguese means ‘kale’ and which phonetically approximates ‘cover’. Hence, the means of interaction and communicability become an intrinsic part of the work of transperipheral projection, which occurs via globally available online platforms, but also through illicit or marginalised uses of these which contravene legal norms established by the commercial music industry.

CONCLUSION

In this article we have sought to develop the notion of scaling to make sense of the positioning of bodies and territories identified as peripheral within established and emerging orders of indexicality (Blommaert 2010). In so doing, we sought to contribute to a growing body of scholarship that points to the agency of those engaged in peripheral cultural production in Brazil, including through the discursive reframing of their lives and work (Lopes 2010; Facina 2011; Lopes et al. 2018; Fabrício & Moita-Lopes 2019).

In the case of Jaloo, his performances and bodily aesthetics constantly revisit and recast ‘unbelonging’, establishing connections to other outsiders. Jaloo rescales his temporal and spatial context through provisional cosmologies that involves multiple ‘global villages’ and peripheral territories. In relation to the evocation of

connections between peripheral spaces, we have used the term *transperipheral* (Windle et al. 2020), which we have connected to the notion of scaling through the idea of transperipheral projection. Instead of thinking about rescaling as a shift in register or scope, particularly from the local to the global (Blommaert 2010), transperipheral projection is a form of radical, horizontal rescaling directed towards a different order of meaning, relevance, and value across space and time that encompasses local and global dimensions. To the extent that such projections gain traction, they contribute to a kind of social imaginary that we have discussed in terms of chronotope.

Jaloo's trajectory, as scaled by the music industry, invokes the colonial chronotope of the civilisational frontier as it encounters the cultural centre of São Paulo. His body and performances are indexed as racially and sexually exotic. A positive revaluing of these categories is enabled by the emergence of an alternative music scene over recent years in São Paulo, in which peripheral artists have become commodities who are incorporated into existing economic structures. Despite high points of prestige within this industry, such as performances in high-profile music festivals, Jaloo continues to occupy a precarious cultural and economic position in which he is exposed to the constant threat of homophobic violence on the streets of São Paulo.

Jaloo is active in rescaling himself and the world around him, drawing from a wide semiotic repertoire which coheres into a transperipheral chronotope. The transperipheral chronotope that Jaloo seeks to establish is dependent on his own socialisation and imaginings, as well as those of an audience who shares his sensibilities and can recognise and value the indexical cues he projects. Jaloo positions himself as an outsider, weird, a foreigner, and an ET in order to suggest transperipheral timespace configurations. He also evokes mystical connections between peripheral music production around the globe and between indigenous peoples. In his own hometown, Jaloo reaches an audience who in turn are active in the collaborative production of transperipheral sensibilities. These include rejection of markers of commercial or Americanised culture in communities that value local, authentic, and queer practices that 'bring an identity'.

The concepts of transperipheral projection and chronotope are relevant to other studies that seek to make visible communicability and interaction involving peripheral identities and territories. The case of Jaloo points to the vast possibilities for such contacts to be made both locally and globally, even if at the same time they remain vulnerable to interruption and gain only limited and conditional visibility in spaces of institutional power.

APPENDIX: TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

underlining emphasis
CAPITALS loud speech

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(0.4)	length of a pause in seconds
(.)	pause less than one-tenth of a second
((laughs))	transcriber's descriptions or comments, contextual information
((...))	words or lines omitted
()	indecipherable
(word)	transcriber's best guess at what was said
sto:p	colons indicate elongation of a sound (number of colons corresponds to length of elongation)
,	weak, 'continuing' intonation
?	rising, 'questioning' intonation
.	falling intonation

NOTES

¹See <https://music.apple.com/br/playlist/jaloo-essenciais/pl.6c1e7966c8164f7b883cab2fd7d727fc>.

²Original quotes have been translated into English by the authors. Transcription conventions are given in the appendix.

³See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42-GO9BfKlg>.

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